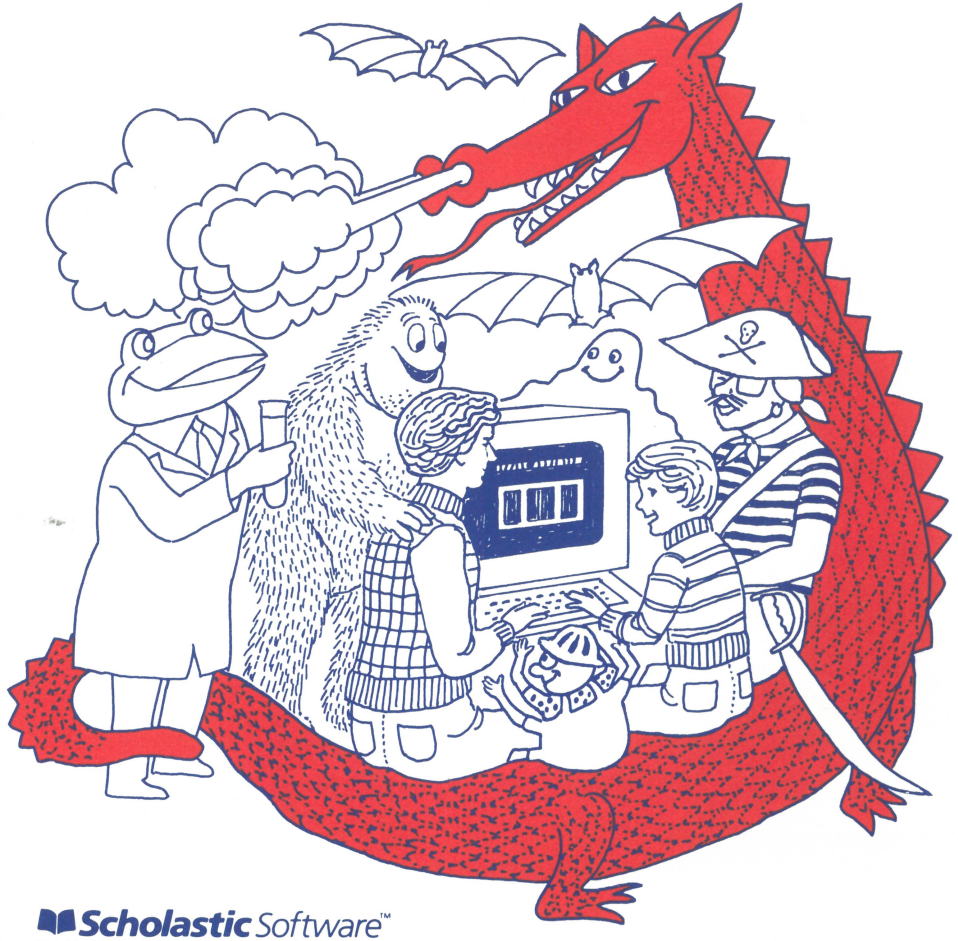
DO MORE WITH SKILL BUILDERS

A Parents' Guide



Scholastic Software™
The Most Trusted Name in Learning

Congratulations on being one of the smart parents who have chosen to give your children all of the advantages of Scholastic's SKILL BUILDERS software.

This Parents' Guide previews many of the exciting programs you will be receiving as a SKILL BUILDERS subscriber. Every SKILL BUILDERS program is based on a school subject, so while your children are "playing" at the computer, they're also learning valuable skills which can help them do better in their classroom.

Of course, there's no greater reward for a child than the encouragement and support of a parent. But with today's busy lifestyles, it's getting harder and harder to squeeze in the hours to work or play with your family.

In keeping with the spirit of "quality not quantity," we at Scholastic have created this Parents' Guide with some easy tips for keeping your children motivated and happy while learning the valuable educational tools included in each and every SKILL BUILDERS program.

TALES OF MYSTERY

The setting: a spooky, run-down mansion. The challenge: to weave fascinating tales of mystery using the storehouse of TWISTAPLOT™ ideas furnished. The possibilities are endless, the creative potential unlimited, as the art of story telling comes alive for your child. There are two complete interactive programs on one disk — *Haunted House* and *Mystery at Pine Crest Manor* — designed to develop reading comprehension and sharpen critical thinking. *Tales of Mystery* will provide years of enjoyment and improved language skills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

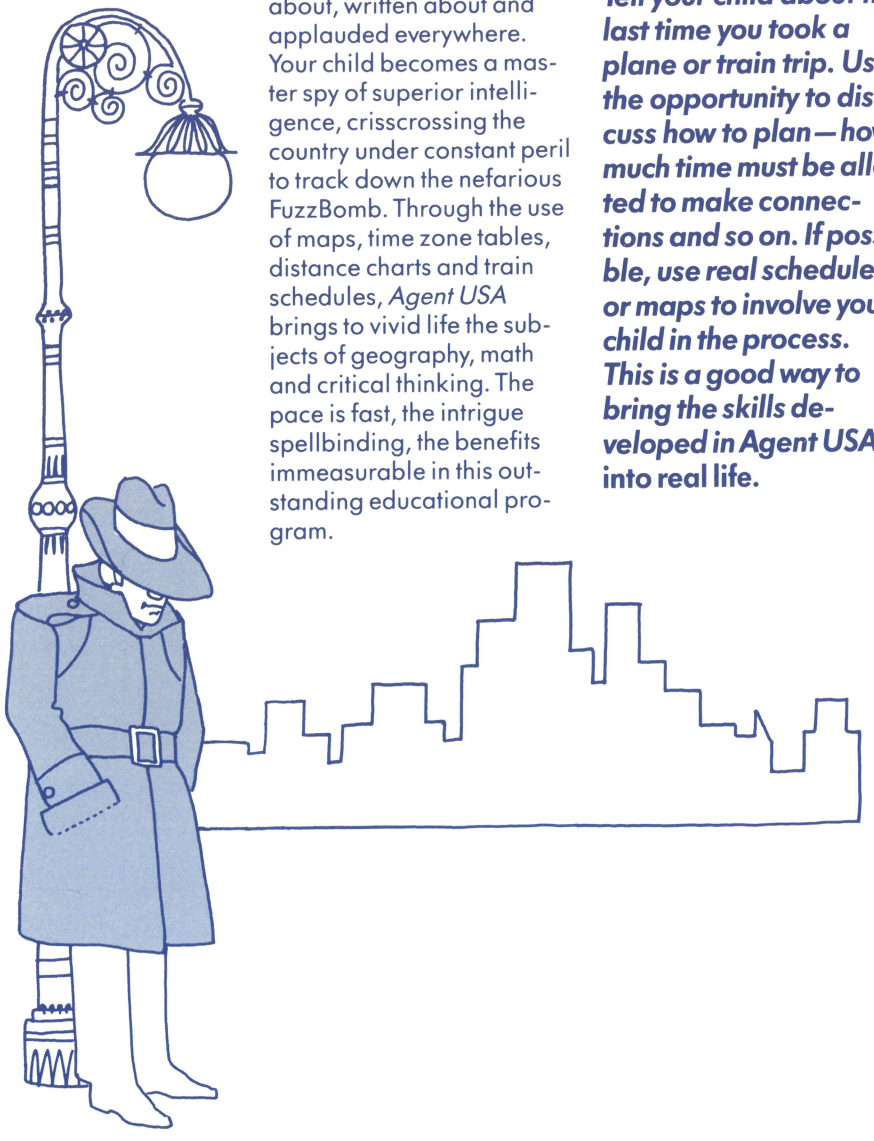
Here's a great way to demonstrate how the sequence of events determines a story. Write down one of the mystery stories your child has created. Then cut the paper into pieces and completely mix up the order of the story. See what kind of new story you can come up with together — it will either be completely silly or some interesting new plot twist.

AGENT USA

This is the award-winning program that's being talked about, written about and applauded everywhere. Your child becomes a master spy of superior intelligence, crisscrossing the country under constant peril to track down the nefarious FuzzBomb. Through the use of maps, time zone tables, distance charts and train schedules, *Agent USA* brings to vivid life the subjects of geography, math and critical thinking. The pace is fast, the intrigue spellbinding, the benefits immeasurable in this outstanding educational program.

PARENTS' HINT

Tell your child about the last time you took a plane or train trip. Use the opportunity to discuss how to plan—how much time must be allotted to make connections and so on. If possible, use real schedules or maps to involve your child in the process. This is a good way to bring the skills developed in Agent USA into real life.

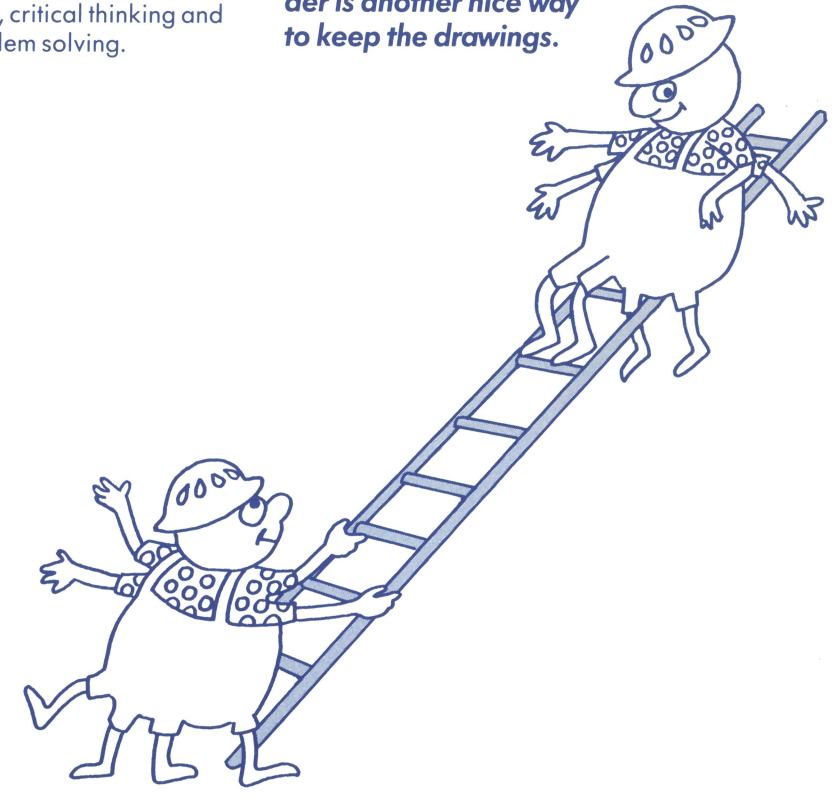


LOGIC BUILDERS

Logic Builders is a challenging, multi-level program whose complexity keeps pace with your child's development. Students maneuver five spiders to spin master webs of geometric patterns as fast and efficiently as possible. The suspense grows, the rewards increase as the games become more complex and your child improves in memory skills, pattern development, critical thinking and problem solving.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Taping thin tracing paper over the computer screen, the child can trace the finished webs, noting the score points. Webs can be colored with bright colors, dated and pinned on the wall to show progress. A three-ring binder is another nice way to keep the drawings.



MATH MAN

A special blend of education and arcade-style action, *Math Man* makes arithmetic fun and challenging.

The action: kids must guide an animated construction worker through a precarious maze of ladders, beams and buckets in search of key numbers. The brainwork: these numbers must be added, subtracted, multiplied and divided to try to match a target number posted on the top of the screen. Used as a teaching tool in schools, *Math Man* requires kids to create simple equations and calls for a high degree of planning and ingenuity. Abstract concepts are grasped as they progress to increasing levels of difficulty.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Math Man is set up with increasing levels of difficulty, and your child must "win" at each level before proceeding to the next. When your child reaches the highest level and is able to successfully complete it, award him or her with a "Math Whiz" Certificate which can be put in a frame and hung on the bedroom wall.

STORY TREE

Watch your child's writing, reading and creative skills soar to new heights.

Story Tree's TWISTAPLOT™ feature lets kids compose exciting mystery and adventure stories with unlimited twists and turns. Children correct, edit, revise and save their work. An incomparable learning tool, *Story Tree* offers a dynamic approach to creative writing.

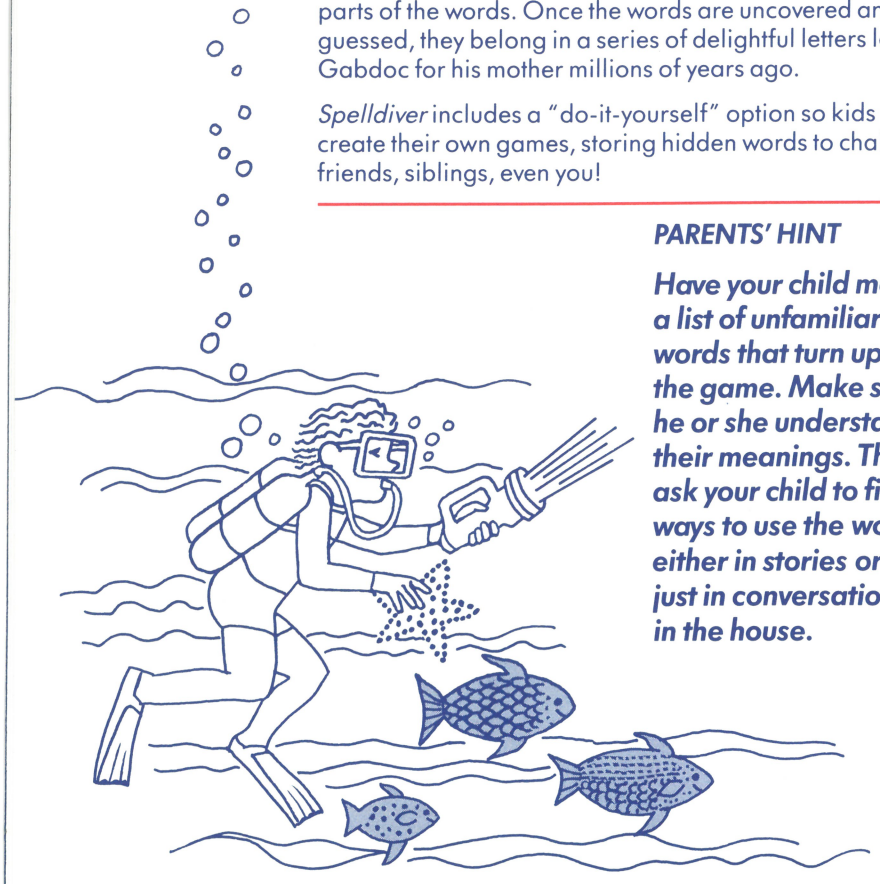
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Make a story tree as big as life. Draw a many-branched tree on a big piece of paper. Together cut out interesting pictures from magazines and place them on the trunk and branches. Next, each of you trace a mental path from the trunk of the tree to the tip of one branch, incorporating all of the pictures along the way. Take turns telling your stories. This is a great way to build enthusiasm for the computer program.

SPELLDIVER

In *Spelldiver,* children develop spelling skills and expand their vocabularies while enjoying exciting underwater adventures. Donning their scuba gear, kids search the ocean floor for hidden words of all sizes left by Gabdoc, a being who once visited Earth. The search is complicated by limited air supplies, nasty underwater flipper nippers and sharks, and by strange lettermoss seaweed obscuring parts of the words. Once the words are uncovered and guessed, they belong in a series of delightful letters left by Gabdoc for his mother millions of years ago.

Spelldiver includes a "do-it-yourself" option so kids can create their own games, storing hidden words to challenge friends, siblings, even you!



PARENTS' HINT

Have your child make a list of unfamiliar words that turn up in the game. Make sure he or she understands their meanings. Then ask your child to find ways to use the words—either in stories or just in conversation in the house.

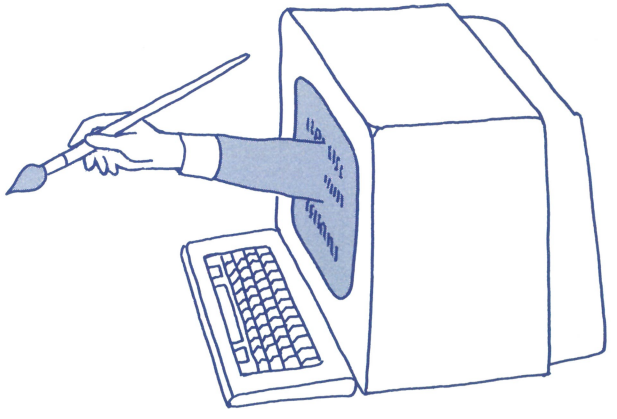
POSTER

Your child can be a computer artist with *Poster,* a simple but powerful programming language that can "paint" the screen.

Children will delight in expressing themselves with 15 different colors to choose from, ten different brush strokes and brush sounds, and ten speeds to work with. They can create patterns and shapes, paint and draw pictures. And *Poster* prints words too, opening the exciting world of posters and illustrated stories. It's endless hours of fun as your child simultaneously learns a simple computer language and explores the reaches of his or her own visual creativity.

PARENTS' HINT

Whatever the holiday, why not use the computer to make special greeting cards? Kids can create their own designs and add their own personalized messages. If a printer is not available, your child may trace the card off of the screen. Use the occasion to discuss the meaning of the holiday.



STORYMAKER

Your child's creative skills take flight as *StoryMaker* lets him become both an author and an artist. Kids use the keyboard to type in words, and move the mouse or joystick to draw pictures—making simple storybooks with beautiful graphic images. There's also a Picture Gallery, so they can select from ready-made images that can be enlarged, shrunk, repeated, reversed and combined in their own original drawings. Stories can be edited, erased or saved on disk or paper. A fabulous creative tool, *StoryMaker* lets kids give free rein to their imaginations as words come to life with pictures.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Write and illustrate a silly story together. You start a sentence with five or six words (i.e., Jimmy was walking when suddenly . . .) and let your child continue the sentence with another five or six words. Then it's your turn again for five or six words, and so on. The story will take all kinds of funny turns, so there's plenty of potential for giggles. Then have your child enter the story onto the computer with StoryMaker.

OPERATION FROG

In *Operation Frog,* the captivating world of biology comes alive with a realistic computer simulation of a frog dissection. Your child selects the instruments, performs the dissection, explores the organism to uncover the revealing fundamentals of biology and anatomy. Then, if the student can put the frog back together properly, it will jump right off the screen!

Operation Frog is a leap ahead in scientific education.

PARENTS' HINT

Before your child starts to use this program, take the opportunity to learn more about frogs and other amphibians using the encyclopedia and other household reference books. After the child has worked with the program, quiz him or her on the glossary of terms at the back of the program book.

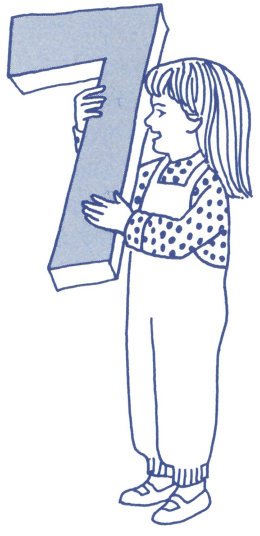
QUATIONS

Here's a fast-paced CROSSMATH™ game that challenges players of all ages to add, subtract and multiply their way to victory. The object of the game: to build equations across the QUATIONS game board using as many numbers and math operations as possible to score the most points. The competition: up to three players can pit their skills against Quato, the math bird.

The heat is on when players opt to work against the clock. Victory is sweet when Quato dances a special victory dance for the winner. Sweeter still—the progress you'll see in your child's problem-solving abilities, and in basic math skills.

PARENTS' HINT

Quato is a tough bird to beat. So ask your child to keep a record of the times he or she wins against Quato. Set a goal: five consecutive wins merits a special prize, such as a new toy or book.



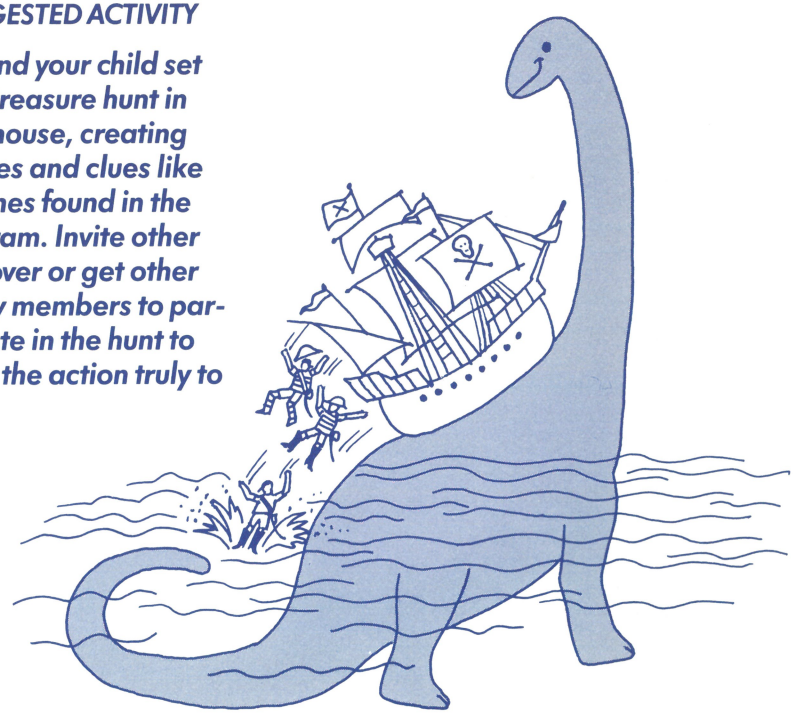
TALES OF DISCOVERY

The thrill of going on hunting expeditions to places so remote they can only be reached via the imagination! That's what these two complete programs on one disk—*Pirates of the Soft Seas* and *Fossils Alive!*—have in common.

Pirates takes your child treasure hunting on faraway Disk Isle, where solving tricky puzzles is the only way to uncover clues leading to five hidden treasure chests. Challenging anagrams, rebuses and secret codes demand quick thinking and master puzzle-solving skills. Travel of a very different kind leads to the prehistoric past in search of fossils in *Fossils Alive!* There the time traveller's exciting TWISTAPLOT™ adventures bring prehistoric times vividly to life. Fifteen different endings and endless turns in the story keep the program fresh and your child's imagination stimulated while learning more about the world that time forgot.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

You and your child set up a treasure hunt in your house, creating puzzles and clues like the ones found in the program. Invite other kids over or get other family members to participate in the hunt to bring the action truly to life.



THE MATH SHOP

The Math Shop takes mathematics to the shopping mall to turn abstract principles into real life practices in a way that's as fun as it is educational.

Students sharpen their math skills in familiar settings like the Pharmacy, the Donut Shop and the Dairy by making change, measuring goods and packing purchases. They can move from job to job, using a range of skills—from percentages and fractions to ratios and proportions. And as they progress, programs get harder, time limits shorter. The more customers served, the better the service and the greater the chance of making the "Top Employees" honor roll.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Send your child on a shopping expedition to the store. Have him or her make up a list of purchases and the prices, and then add them up. Create a problem: you only have X amount of cash—which items could be returned to meet that limit?

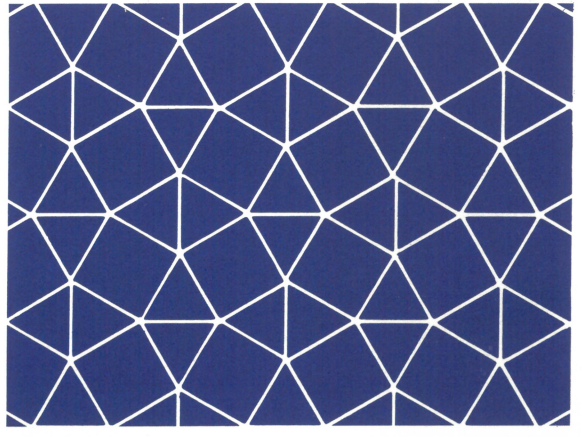
LOGO ROBOT

Meet *Logo Robot:* talented, friendly, eager to carry out your slightest command . . . IF you know how to talk to him in his own language. And since that language is a simple version of LOGO, your child will actually be mastering the basics of an important computer language.

Step by step, *Logo Robot* teaches your child how to give commands, how to write, edit and file procedures. How to change the disk drive setup and initialize a data disk. Learning first how to teach *Logo Robot* to walk, your child will eventually run programs that explore the endless possibilities of graphic design and problem solving. Fourteen pen styles, eight different colors and a wide range of capabilities make *Logo Robot* a fun way to teach a child to understand the mind of a computer!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

A computer can draw perfect geometric shapes. Have your child create a drawing using just one shape—a triangle, square, hexagon or rectangle. The child can repeat the shape any number of times, change the color or the angle—so long as just one shape is used. The drawing can be abstract or put together to form an image.



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